I. AMENDMENTS

In the specification:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at line 19, page 2 as follows:

--Thus, in one aspect, the invention includes a method of eliciting an immune response against a hepatitis C virus (HCV) E2 and/or E1E2 antigen (*e.g.*, one or more purified polynucleotides encoding these antigens) comprising the step of (a) administering to a subject at least one polynucleotide encoding the E2 and/or E1E2 antigen(s). The polynucleotides encode HCV E2 and/or E1E2 polypeptides that are preferably non-secreted and, additionally, encode full-length E2. In preferred embodiments, the immune response is a humoral immune response, for example, a response that generates at least one neutralization of binding (NOB) antibody. In certain embodiments, more than one polynucleotide encoding different E2 or E1E2 antigens are administered. In various embodiments, the full-length (or non-truncated) E2 antigen(s) encoded by the polynucleotide(s) comprise/comprises amino acids 384-746 of an HCV polyprotein; amino acids 384-749 of an HCV polyprotein; 384-809 of an HCV polyprotein); or combinations thereof. In other embodiments, the antigen(s) encoded by the polynucleotide(s) include/includes E1 as well as E2 (*e.g.*, constructs encoding amino acids 192-746 of an HCV polyprotein, amino acids 192-809 of an HCV polyprotein; amino acids 192-749 of an HCV polyprotein). Thus, the polynucleotides may encode one or more full-length E2 and one or more E1E2 antigens. In further embodiments, the antigen(s) is/are intracellularly produced (*e.g.*, not secreted) truncated E2 (*e.g.*, amino acids 384-715 of an HCV polyprotein; amino acids 384-661 of an HCV polyprotein, amino acids 340-674 of an HCV polyprotein). The polynucleotides may be, for example, DNA, plasmid DNA or other expression vector. In any of the methods described herein, the subject is or is not infected with one or more strains or HCV. Furthermore, in various embodiments, the methods may further comprise the step of administering an adjuvant (*e.g.*, cardiotoxin) to the mammal. --